

# Importance of Community

By Sarah Newman



Humanity has always known that community and connection with others is crucial. From the beginning of time, we have always sought out each other for many purposes, like protection and companionship. Today, stable communities are an important aspect in our lives. Young adults, especially, need to form these communities because they are no longer right in front of us. As a young adult myself, I have seen how hard it is to create a good, stable community of friends. Before I became a young adult, community was easy to find. In elementary school all the way through high school, I saw the same people every day, making it easy to form a group of friends. Once this part of my life was done, it was harder to establish these essential communities. In college, I met up with the same people maybe twice a week, and for only a semester, making it harder to create long lasting friendships. I needed people that I could trust, visit, and communicate with outside of work and college. Community is essential for all young adults because it gives us support, the opinions of others, and the chance to step out of a comfort zone.

Establishing a community gives us a support system, which is needed in the life of a young adult. Work, college, and life in general bring on stress and hard times, and establishing a community creates an opportunity to have the support of others. Social support systems are an important part of our lives. These systems include anyone we trust and can go to for help, advice, or any other type of emotional support.<sup>1</sup> Support systems help us deal with stress, anxiety, and other common issues in life. They are there for the purpose of talking out our problems, and even seeing others who have seen similar problems. Support gives us the encouragement to get through the hard times and rejoice in the good times.

Besides a good support system, having a community also gives us the chance to hear the opinions of others. Sometimes, it is good to dialog with another person, or persons, about a particular choice or opinion. It brings the opportunity to listen instead of speak, and make us think. Good listeners give



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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ddssafety.net/content/social-support-systems-and-maintaining-mental-health>

themselves opportunities to understand other people's viewpoints and widen their own.<sup>2</sup> This is important to a young adult because many times, it is easy to assume we are in the right, when actually, we are wrong about a particular issue or choice because we have not heard everything about it. Dialog itself is also important, even if it is not about choices. Sometimes, it is simply good to talk, because this makes relationships stronger, which will create a better community.

Establishing a community requires taking risks. We cannot simply walk into a room and expect to be liked by everyone. This creates the opportunity for us to step outside of a comfort zone, which is a crucial skill for life because it creates a challenge. Michael Ungar, Ph.D., a professor at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia and a social worker and family therapist, says "To grow, we need to experience challenges -- whether we're 4, 14, or 40."<sup>3</sup> If a young adult establishes this risk taking skill early on in life, it will be easier to accept the challenges that they come across later. As I have built up a small community, I have definitely become more outgoing. This has helped me with my job, and I know



it will help me in the future. Having a community gives the opportunity to be sociable and welcoming every time someone new enters into it, or the group decides to do something new and challenging.

Having a community gives us support when it is needed, opinions when asked, and a way to step out of our comfort zone.

It is crucial in the time of being a young adult, because it is harder to create these communities since they are no longer handed to us through the aid of school. Kurt Vonnegut, an American novelist, once said, "What should young people do with their lives today? Many things, obviously. But the most daring thing is to create stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured." For me, these stable communities have given me so much more than companionship; I am a stronger, more confident young adult because of the people I encounter in my own personal communities.

Communities are something that humans have known is needed since the beginning of time, and we will always need each other, through every season of our lives.

*Resource for community:*

*Are you a young adult looking for a good community?*

*Like the Radiate page on Facebook at [St. Timothy Radiate!](#)*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://psychology1.knoji.com/why-its-important-to-listen-to-other-people/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wholeliving.com/134159/importance-taking-risks>